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SUBJECT: MAY 15 MFA PRESS BRIEFING: SICHUAN EARTHQUAKE RELIEF, BURMA  
DISASTER RELIEF

¶1. Key points at the May 15, 2008 MFA Press Briefing were:

-- China appreciates international offers of assistance following the May 12 earthquake in Sichuan.

-- With the exception of Japan, China is still considering offers from countries to provide rescue teams to earthquake affected areas.

-- China says no known nuclear facilities were affected by the earthquake.

-- Foreign tourists in Sichuan are "basically safe," although contact has yet to be made with 41 tourists.

-- The MFA is organizing a reporting trip for foreign media to the disaster area.

-- Concerning cyclone aid to Burma, China hopes the international community will "respect the will of the Burmese."

Sichuan Earthquake

¶2. During the May 15, 2008 regular MFA press briefing, spokesperson Qin Gang said many countries have offered to send assistance and rescue teams to China following the May 12 earthquake in Sichuan. The Chinese Government and people are grateful for the offers of support. When asked for specific relief needs, Qin said China requires housing material, communications equipment and medical supplies. China has so far received offers totaling approximately \$100 million and more than \$10 million in supplies, Qin stated.

¶3. China has agreed to allow a Japanese rescue team to travel to the disaster area and is considering similar requests from other countries, Qin said. China views Japan's offer as a gesture of "friendly affection" and appreciates the support of the Japanese Government and people. When asked why China did not accept rescue teams from South Korea and Australia, Qin said local authorities are still assessing the situation.

¶4. When asked if the earthquake damaged nuclear facilities in the Sichuan area, Qin said he is not aware of any such damage and directed questions to the relevant Chinese authorities.

Foreign Tourists in Sichuan

¶5. According to the Tourism Board, Qin said, there were 93 foreign tourists in Sichuan during the earthquake and all are "basically safe." However, contact has yet to be made with 41 of the tourists. The Chinese Government is in close contact with relevant embassies regarding 12 American, 31 British and two Israeli tourists.

MFA Reporting Trip to Earthquake Affected Areas

¶6. Qin says the MFA is organizing a trip for foreign media to earthquake affected areas. Qin said 35 news agencies are already

reporting from the area. He expressed hope that foreign reporters would tell the world the "true" story of how the Chinese Government and people are "united to meet the needs" of those affected by the disaster.

#### Burma Cyclone Disaster Relief

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17. Asked to comment on reports that Burma was diverting aid from cyclone victims, Qin said the international community should "respect the will of the Burmese." Describing Burma as a friendly neighbor of China, Qin expressed China's empathy for the victims of the cyclone disaster and said he hopes the international community and Burma can agree "through friendly consultations" on the aid Burma needs.